THE ERIE AND HURON RAILWAY

OF CANADA.

1884?

Letter from the President of the Erie & Huron Ry. Co. to the Ministers of Rys & the members of the Houses of Commons & Senate.

016023

MICHIGAN
PORT HURON & LAKE MICHIGAN
RAILWAY
DETROIT & MILWAUKEE
GRAND TRUNK
LANSING & LAKE MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN CENTL
LAKE SHORE & MICHIGAN SOUTHN
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TRENTON
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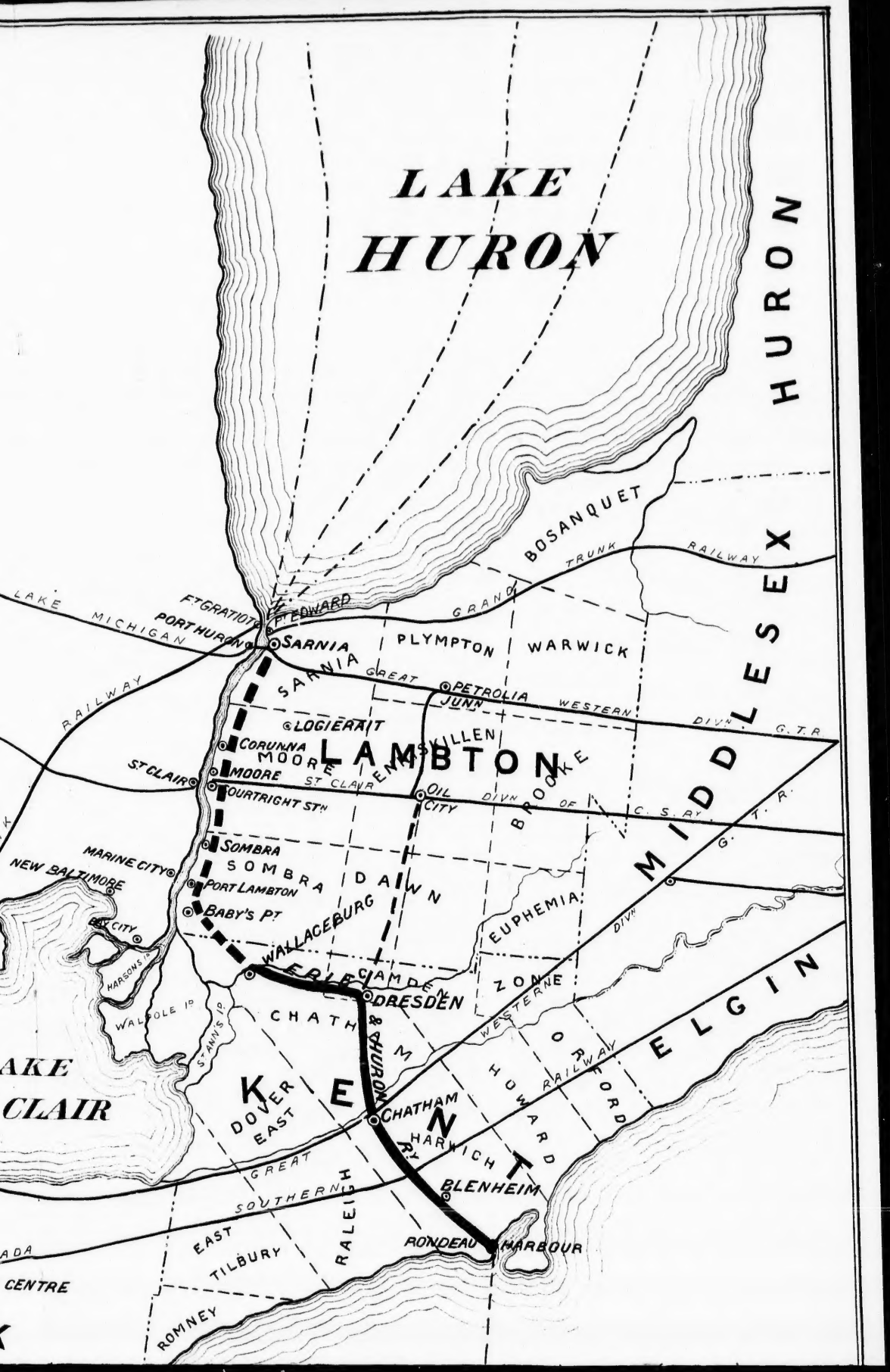
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EUPHEMIA
ZONE
CHATHAM
DOVER EAST
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HOWARD
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EAST TILBURY
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CAMDEN
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BLENHEIM
RONDEAU HARBOUR
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GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY
GREAT WESTERN DIVN G.T.R.
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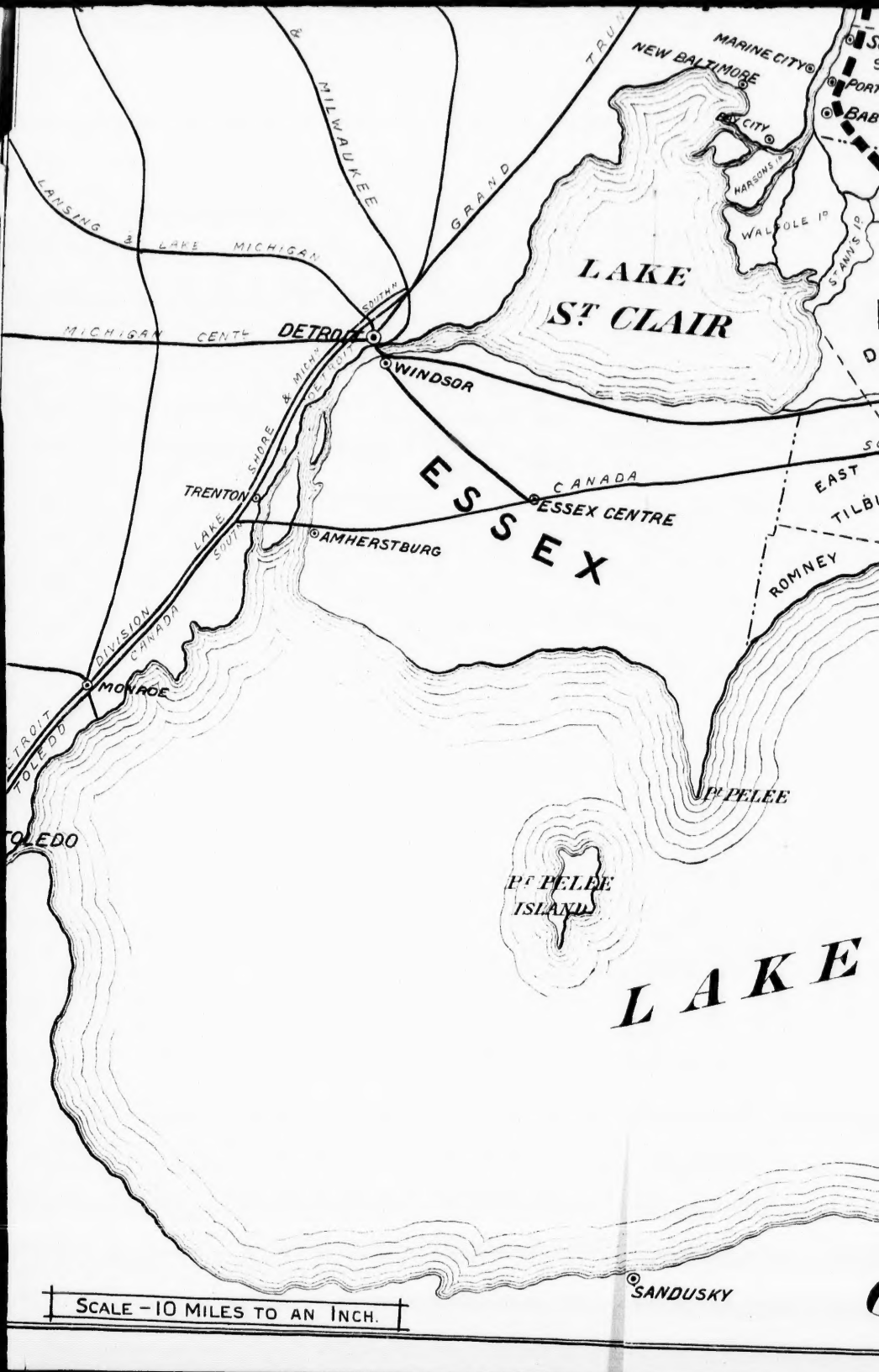
LAKE MICHIGAN RAILWAY
ERIE & HURON Ry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MONROE
TOLEDO
PT PELEE
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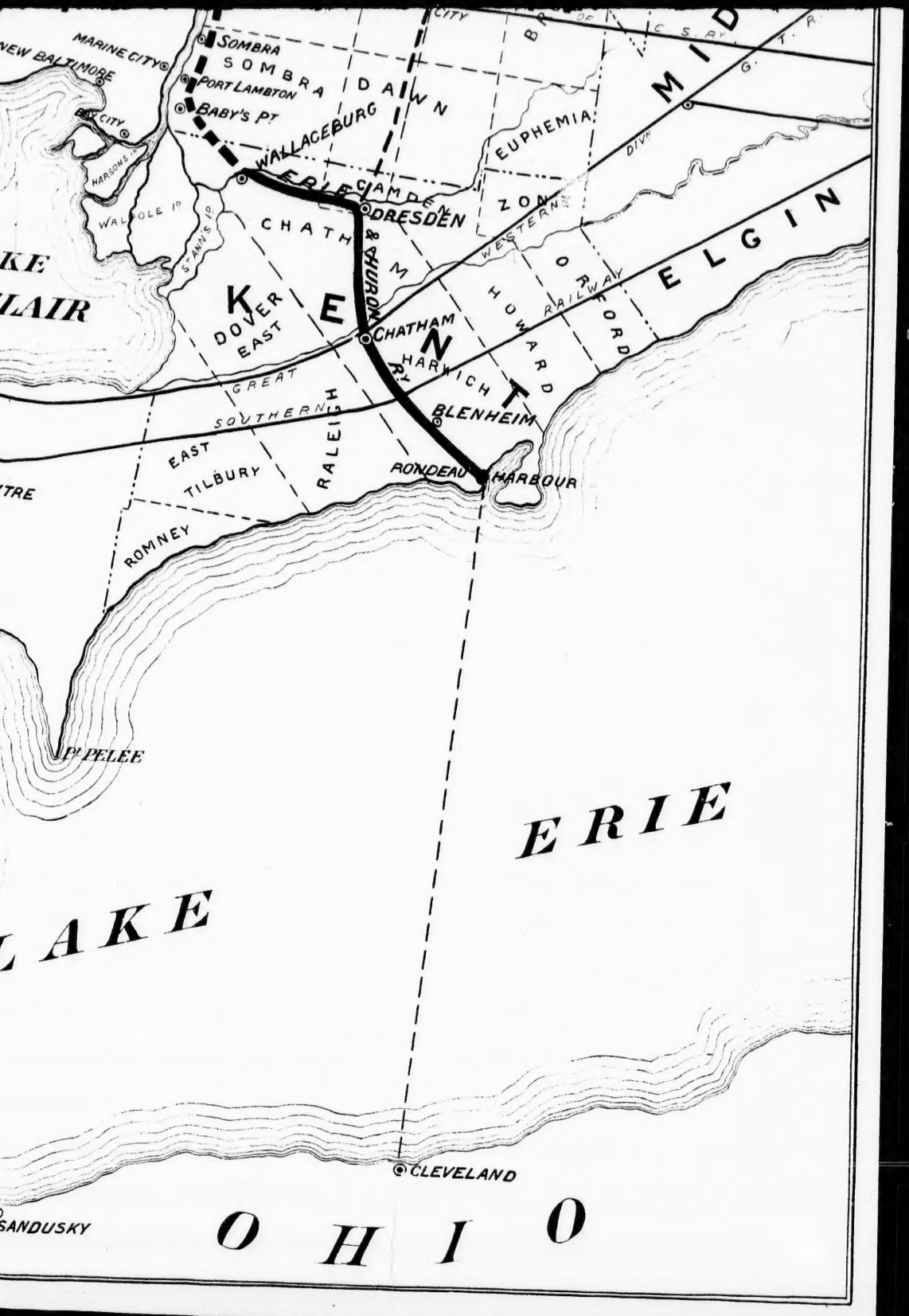
SANDUSKY
LANSING & LAKE MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN CENTL
GRAND TRUNK
MILWAUKEE
LAKE SHORE & MICH SOUTHN
DETROIT TOLEDO DIVISION CANADA
SCALE - 10 MILES TO AN INCH.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To the Honourable, the Minister of Railways, and Members of the Senate and House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada:—

The Erie and Huron Railway Company beg to present a statement of their position and affairs.

In the year 1872 this Company was chartered by the Ontario Government to build a Line of Railway from the Rond Eau, a Government Harbour of Refuge on Lake Erie to the Town of Sarnia, at the foot of Lake Huron, *via* the Towns of Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, and Wallaceburg, and the Villages of Port Lambton, Port Sombra, Cartwright, Mooretown, and Corruna, on the River St. Clair, to Port Sarnia; with a Branch from the Town of Dresden through the Township of Dawn, and the Village of Oil Springs to Oil City on the Canada Southern Railway. See map.

A Bonus of $155,000 was voted, in aid of the scheme, by the County of Kent, and another Bonus of $110,000 was also voted by the County of Lambton. Costly and prolonged Litigation to set aside these Bonuses followed on a suit brought by a ratepayer, and the Company was thus prevented from carrying on its scheme until the year 1878, when, having gained its case, the Directors made an agreement with a prominent contractor for the building of their Road through the County of Kent only, the Bonus of $110,000 from the County of Lambton having expired, through lapse of time lost in Litigation.

In 1879 they were obliged to abandon the work temporarily for want of funds to carry on their contract.

In 1881 the Ontario Government passed an Act for their relief, by making the County of Kent Bonus payable when the Line was built to Wallaceburg and voting a subsidy of $2,000 a mile to the Company, payable when finished to that point.

In 1882, further Bonuses having been voted to the extent of $70,000 by the Towns of Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, and Wallaceburg, the Company entered into another contract for the completion and equipment of that portion of the Line, and on the 30th September, 1883, that section of the Road from Rond Eau to Wallaceburg, a distance of 41½ miles, was built in a first class manner with steel rails and iron bridges, together with wharves and piers at Rond Eau and Wallaceburg, and all necessary

stations, sidings, shops and other buildings, and equipped with a good and sufficient supply of Locomotives, freight, postal, and passenger coaches, and is now regularly running, carrying passengers, moving freight, and transporting the mails, in the most satisfactory manner, to the great advantage of the public at a cost of $10,000 a mile in bonds of the Road, which together with the stock and bonuses, bring up the cost of Road, 41½ miles, and equipment, as it now stands, to a little over $700,000.

The Company now find itself in the unpleasant position of its Bonuses and other Assets entirely exhausted, and its Road but partly built.

The Shareholders are fully impressed with the value and importance of their scheme, and the great need of completing it to Sarnia. Not only to the Municipalities along their Route, which are entirely without Railway facilities, but also to the Trade and Navigation of that portion of the Province of Ontario and to the Dominion as well, by connecting the Lakes of Erie and Huron, thus avoiding the dangers and difficulties of the Flats of St. Clair, and the constantly changing of Channel, which is now altogether in American waters.

The proposed Route runs parrallel with the American Border in the State of Michigan for a considerable distance, with only the River St. Clair intervening, across which it is proposed to establish Ferries at given points, by which considerable advantages to that portion of the Province will be gained through the increased intercourse and traffic.

It is also expected that considerable advantages to the Peninsula of Western Ontario will arise by the completion to Sarnia in affording a short cut to the North-West by the Steamship Lines from that Port.

The completion to Sarnia and connection with Steamship Lines from there to the North West, would enable the Company to put on a regular Boat from the Government Harbour of Refuge, Rond Eau, to Cleveland, thus shortening the Route from Cleveland, Pittsburg, and Cincinnatti, to Sarnia and the North-West by over 100 miles, and tend to bring considerable American travel and traffic through the Western Peninsula.

These advantages are now, for want of funds to go on with, in imminent danger of being lost to the Province.

It will cost over $400,000 to complete and equip the 30 miles from Wallaceburg to Sarnia and build the necessary wharves, slips, and ferries, and a draw bridge over the Sydenham River.

The Company have not a dollar of cash or bonus, either Government or Municipal, but probably could raise $200,000 on the Bonds of the undertaking if the Government and Municipalities interested, would assist with about $200,000 more.

Members of the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Sarnia have assured the Company that if the requisite aid from other sources could be had the Town would vote a Bonus of $40,000 for the completion of the Road to that place.

The Townships of Sombra and Moore it is confidently expected would give $15,000 each, and the Company have had some encouragement of small assistance from other sources. So if the Dominion Government will grant to this Company the same aid per mile as was given by them to the Napanee and Tamworth Road, as well as some others, the expectations of the promoters could be fulfilled to the great advantage of the western part of the Province of Ontario, and to the advantage of the Trade and Navigation of the Dominion of Canada.

By the operation of an Act of the Parliament of Canada the last Session, 46 Vic., Chapter 24, this Company came under the control of the Dominion Parliament, because its line crosses the G. W. R. Division of the Grand Trunk Railway as well as that of the Canada Southern Railway, and a short Act is now before this House for an extension of time in which to complete its Line which has become necessary.

Owing to the taking over of this Company under the control of the Dominion Parliament by the above cited Act, and away from the control of the Ontario Government, the Company appear to have lost the right to look to the Ontario Government for a continuance of their subsidy, which it had been led to expect, for the completion of the work, and have been plainly told by the latter Government that it must now look to the Dominion Government for a continuance of the aid heretofore voted and to be regarded as an unfinished work taken off their hands, which the Ontario Government were morally bound to see through, and that the Dominion Government having taken this Company off their hands should take it with all its equities.

Withont discussing the logic or justice of this proposition the Company humbly beg to set forth that unless the Dominion Parliament adopt this view this Company seem likely to fall between two stools, and its scheme and undertaking be completely ruined.

The President and Directors of the Erie and Huron Railway beg that the Dominion Government and the members of the Senate and House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada will fairly consider the circumstances and do what in their judgment may appear to be just.

A. MCKELLAR,

President.